

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 MC-02 ACDA-10 SAM-01 OMB-01 /082 W

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R 171618Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5029

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS THR HAGUE 0254

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT

1. WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE USAF SELECTION OF THE YF-16, PRESS COVERAGE OF THE AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT COMPETITION HAS AGAIN BECOME EXTENSIVE. FOLLOWING ARE SOME COMMENTS FROM DUTCH POLITICAL FIGURES ON THE SUBJECT.

2. VAN ELSSEN (CATHOLIC PARTY), CHAIRMAN OF SECOND CHAMBER DEFENSE COMMITTEE, HAS SAID THAT HE IS NOT CONVINCED OF THE ADVISABILITY OF THE EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY ISOLATING ITSELF FROM THE MUCH MORE TECHNICALLY ADVANCED US. HE HAS CALLED FOR DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN US AND EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES, AND SAYS HE PLANS MEETINGS SOON BETWEEN HIS COMMITTEE AND DEFMIN VREDELING TO DISCUSS SITUATION.

3. DANKERT (LABOR PARTY), CHAIRMAN OF SECOND CHAMBER
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM

VISIT TO CALIFORNIA TO SEE THE NORTHROP F-5E, CONTINUES TO PUSH FOR A CHOICE OF SOMETHING OTHER THAN ONE OF THE FOUR COMPETING AIRCRAFT. DANKERT, TAKING A LINE THAT WILL FIND SUPPORT AMONG SOME OF HIS LABOR PARTY PARLIAMENTARY COLLEAGUES, SAID, "I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE CONSORTIUM (MEMBERS) WILL MAKE THE SAME CHOICE. THEREFORE THE MATTER IS OPEN FOR THE NETHERLANDS TO MAKE A FREE CHOICE. THERE IS MORE REASON THAN EVER TO CONSIDER OTHER AIRCRAFT, AND IN THIS RESPECT THE F-5E TIGER COULD BE A SERIOUS CANDIDATE." CLAIMING THAT THE F-5E IS ADEQUATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PRESENT MILITARY SITUATION IN EUROPE AND COSTS ABOUT A THIRD WHAT THE FOUR COMPETING PLANES WILL COST, DANKERT PUT A NEW TWIST ON HIS ARGUMENTS WHEN HE SAID THAT THE YF-16 AND YF-17 ARE DESIGNED FOR THREATS THAT DO NOT EVEN EXIST. "IF THE NETHERLANDS BUYS ONE OF THEM, IT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE ARMS RACE."

3. DANKERT'S BASIC APPEAL TO FORGET ABOUT AN ADVANCED AIRCRAFT AND PICK ONE THAT IS CHEAPER AND DESIGNED MORE FOR GROUND SUPPORT OPERATIONS HAS BEEN ECHOED FREQUENTLY BY KLAAS DE VRIES, A MEMBER OF THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, AND LIKE DANKERT A MEMBER OF THE LABOR PARTY. DE VRIES HAS EXPRESSED UNHAPPINESS WITH BRIEFINGS GIVEN TO THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE BY VREDELING ON THE SUBJECT, CLAIMING THAT THE DEFMIN IS HOLDING BACK ON THE FACTS WHICH THE CHAMBER NEEDS TO MAKE A FAIR EVALUATION OF DUTCH REQUIREMENTS. WHILE DE VRIES SAYS THAT AN AMERICAN CHOICE IS LIKELY, AND WILL HAVE GREAT SUPPORT FROM CENTER AND RIGHT IN DUTCH POLITICS, HE HAS WARNED VREDELING AGAINST IGNORING THE WISHES OF HIS OWN PARTY AND OTHERS ON THE LEFT.

4. FOR HIS PART, VREDELING ON JANUARY 10 COMMENTED THAT HE WOULD OF COURSE TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE VIEWS OF THE APRIL LABOR PARTY CONGRESS ON PEACE AND SECURITY ON THE QUESTION OF F-104 REPLACEMENT. WITH THIS SAID, HE THEN COMMENTED THAT CONGRESSES DO NOT BUY AIRPLANES. HE ALSO EVADED ANSWERING WHEN ASKED IF HE WOULD WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE CONGRESS BEFORE MAKING HIS RECOMMENDATION.

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5. VREDELING'S REMARKS ON THIS SCORE HAVE PROMPTED ONE OPPOSITION PARLIAMENTARIAN TO ASK IF HE WOULD ALSO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE VIEWS OF OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES. THE QUESTIONER, DS'70 MEMBER KEUNING, ALSO PRESSED FOR AN ANSWER AS TO WHEN HE WOULD MAKE HIS DECISION.

6. MEANWHILE, DASSAULT REPRESENTATIVES HAVE PAID ANOTHER CALL ON DUTCH TRADE UNIONS. AFTER A MEETING WITH THE THREE DUTCH LABOR FEDERATIONS ON JAN. 16, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE UNIONS SAID THAT THE FRENCH FIRM NOW OFFERED MORE PROSPECTS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS THAN IT HAD OFFERED PREVIOUSLY, BUT HAD MENTIONED NO HARD FIGURES.
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